

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT NO.

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

CONFIDENTIAL

COUNTRY USSR (Georgian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 28 Feb. 1952

SUBJECT: Tbilisi/Sarvan (Sandar) Airfield

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PLACE
ACQUIRED

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1. The airfield was located just south of Sander (Marreuli or Sarva) (41°29'N/
44°47'E), Georgian SSR, between the railroad line to Yerevan (40°11'N/44°30'E)
and the road to Bolnisi (Lyuksemburg) (41°20'N/44°33'E). * There was a north-
south concrete runway, about 20 x 2,000 meters. The landing field was dry, the
subsoil water level being four meters below the surface. The field had no rail-
road connections. Railroad tank cars filled with aviation fuel were towed to the
field on rollers. A hangar located in the northwestern corner of the field
appeared to be used as a repair hangar. There were no aircraft revetments. **
2. Installations being constructed northwest of the field and the road to Lyuksemburg
included three two-story buildings, each of them 20 x 40 meters, fitted with
one large dormitory and four smaller rooms each; three four-story officer
barracks, each of them 15 x 15 meters, with a total capacity of 40 families;
and four three-story residential houses, each 10 x 25 meters, allegedly officer
barracks. **
3. The field had red and white boundary lights and white lights bordering the two
sides of the runway.
4. The field was occupied by about 15 Bostons and about 30 IL-2s, some of them marked
by a black spade, the others by a black lion in a red circle.
5. The IL-2s practiced flying in formations of 9 to 12 aircraft, in addition to
firing at ground targets with machine guns and rockets, at towed air targets,
low-level attacks and precision bombing. At night these planes flew individually
or in formations of nine aircraft. The Douglas Boston type planes practiced
precision bombing and formation flying in groups of three. **

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6. The airfield personnel were quartered in the airfield buildings and in town. According to a Soviet construction foreman, more large buildings were scheduled for construction near the officers' billets. From conversations with Soviet soldiers it was learned that their period of service was six years. On the average they were from 24 to 26 years of age. The number of NCOs among them was exceptionally high and many of them wore war decorations. About 400 recruits arrived in September 1946. ***
7. The airfield was located about 500 meters south of Sandar, just west of the railroad line to Tbilisi (Tiflis) (41°42'N/44°45'E). * Three wooden buildings were on the field. Air force NCOs and officers, who were quartered in town, were seen marching to the field. The NCOs, upward of 150 men, were young soldiers wearing blue uniforms.
8. From 12 to 15 biplanes and six to eight single-engine fighters fitted with in-line engine and retractable landing gear were stationed at the field. The biplanes made individual and local flights, also individual parachute jumps were made from them, while the fighters were seen flying individually and occasionally firing at low targets. ***
9. The airfield was located 300 to 400 meters southwest of Sandar and had only one wooden building housing the guard detail. A railroad connection from the Sandar railroad station to the field was constructed in 1946. The field was occupied by several hundred twin-engine aircraft covered by tarpaulins. ***

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* ~~SECRET~~ Comment: For location of the field, see Annex. It is believed that the location of the field was stated correctly, since the data transmitted agree with previous information. A map study shows that the terrain at the place mentioned is suitable for the construction of an airfield. The field is presumably identical to an installation known by the name of Sarvan airfield during the war. According to unconfirmed information, this field was located some hundred meters farther to the southeast and east of the railroad line.

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** ~~SECRET~~ Comment: The data on the runway, the barracks installation and apartment houses northwest of the road to Lyuksenburgi (Bolinisi) are new. However, they are believed to be correct since the reporting source was employed at the field. The runway was probably wider than stated in the present report.

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*** ~~SECRET~~ Comment: The data as to the occupation of the field vary, and partly contradict previous information covering the same period of time. It is believed that a ground attack and a bomber regiment were stationed at the field in 1946/47. A pilot school was probably located there in 1948, but was replaced by either a bomber unit or a twin-engine school. The statement that several hundred twin-engine planes were stationed at the field in late 1948 is believed to be an exaggeration.

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~~SECRET~~ Comment: Sandar should not be confused with Nakendari (41-30N, 44-47E).

Attachment: Sketch of Tbilisi/Sarvan (Sandar) airfield

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